

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 8003

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT YO US

SUBJ: BILIC ON NIXON

REF: BELGRADE 7885

1. DURING DEC 8 FAREWELL CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN SECRETARY MOJSOV AMBASSADOR RAISED QUESTION WHETHER CHARGE IN INTERVIEW OF LCY SECRETARY JURE BILIC THAT REMARKS MADE BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON DURING HIS 1970 ZAGREB VISIT WERE INTENDED TO LEAD TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA (REFTEL) IMPLIED GOY RE-EXAMINATION OF THE IMPORTANCE THEY HAVE ASCRIBED TO NIXON'S VISIT IN 1970. MOJSOV RESPONDED: (A) THAT BILIC WAS BLAMING NOT REPEAT NOT NIXON BUT "CROATIAN CIRCLES" IN THE LEADERSHIP WHICH WANTED TO EXPLOIT NIXON'S STATEMENTS; (B) THAT BILIC WAS EMOTIONALLY RESENTFUL OF THOSE CROATIAN LEADERS AT THAT TIME SINCE HE WAS PART OF THE SAME CROATIAN LEADERSHIP AND WAS THE MAIN TARGET OF THOSE EVENTUALLY OUSTED FROM POWER; AND (C) THAT BILIC IS AN OUTSPOKEN BUT USEFUL POLITICIAN.

2. MOJSOV POINTED OUT THAT BILIC HAD ALSO CRITICIZED THE FOREIGN OFFICE (1970 VINTAGE) BUT THAT "WE ARE NOT COMPLAINING". HE ADDED THAT THE KIND OF IDEAS OF WHICH BILIC COMPLAINED (SUGGESTING THAT YUGOSLAVIA WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF IT MOVED TOWARDS A SWITZERLAND-TYPE NEUTRALITY) WERE EXPRESSED "IN OTHER PLACES" AT THE TIME.

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3. MOJSOV STRESSED THAT THE NIXON VISIT AND THE STATEMENTS MADE BY NIXON AND TITO AT THAT TIME ARE "THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP" AND THAT "THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT".

4. COMMENT: I TOLD MOJSOV THAT I WOULD REPORT HIS EXPLANATION OF BILIC'S REMARKS TO THE STATE DEPT AS I HAD REPORTED THE ORIGINAL REMARKS AND ALTHOUGH I WELCOMED MOJSOV'S EXPLANATION, I WAS PERSONALLY TROUBLED BY BILIC'S STATEMENT.
SILBERMAN

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NNN

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